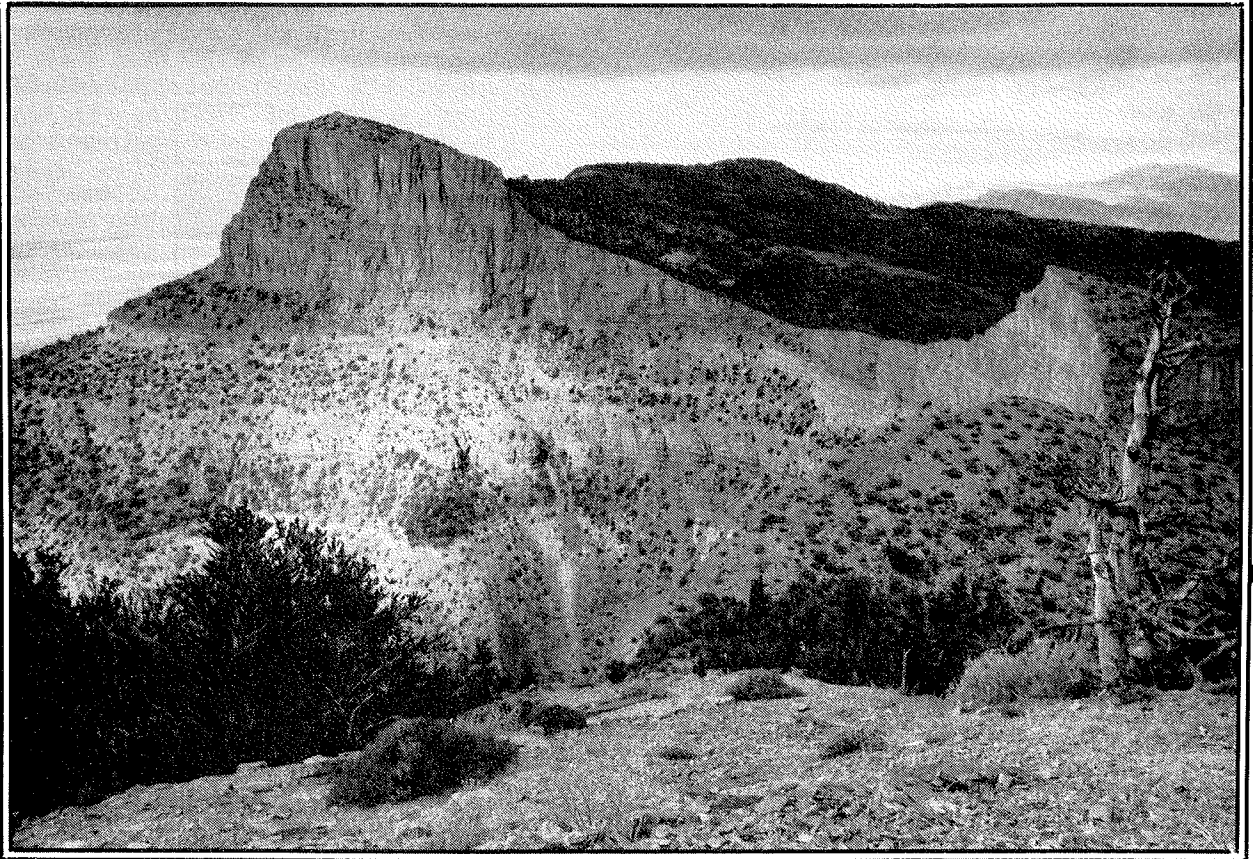


Notch Peak WSA



NOTCH PEAK WSA

R. 14 W.

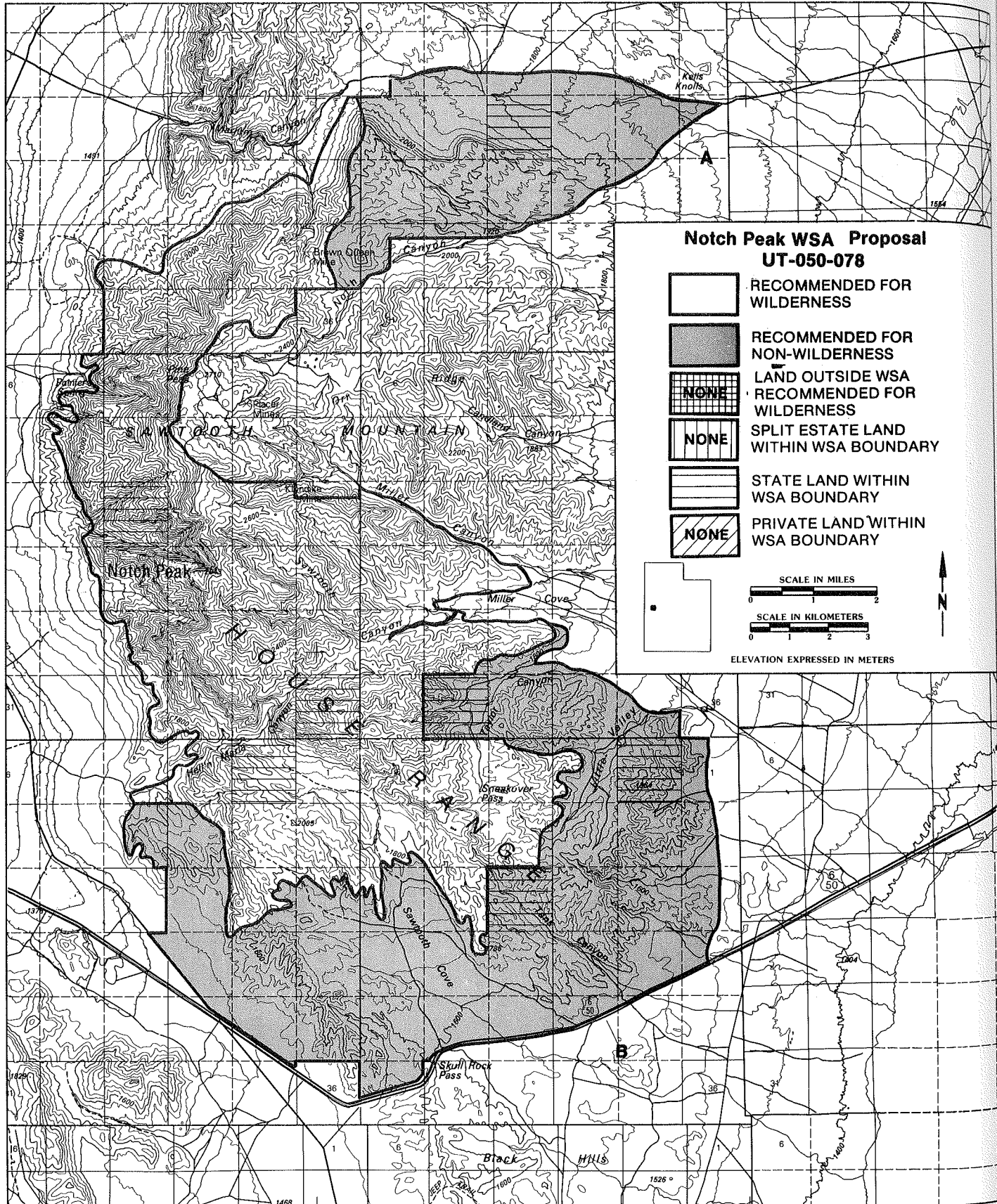
R. 13 W.

R. 12 W.







T. 18 S.

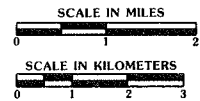
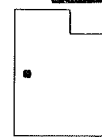
T. 19 S.

T. 20 S.



Notch Peak WSA Proposal UT-050-078

-  RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
-  RECOMMENDED FOR NON-WILDERNESS
-  LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
-  SPLIT ESTATE LAND WITHIN WSA BOUNDARY
-  STATE LAND WITHIN WSA BOUNDARY
-  PRIVATE LAND WITHIN WSA BOUNDARY



ELEVATION EXPRESSED IN METERS

NOTCH PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

1. THE STUDY AREA: 51,130 acres

The Notch Peak Wilderness Study Area (WSA) (UT-050-078) is in the House Range, in western Millard County, about 45 miles west of Delta, Utah (population 1,930). The study area is shaped somewhat like the letter "C", and is about 15 miles from north to south and 9 miles from east to west in the southern portion (see Map). It includes 51,130 acres of public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and seven sections (4,479 acres) of State land (see Table 1). Improved and unimproved roads partly delimit the WSA on the northern, southern, and a major portion of the eastern sides.

The western boundary is generally at the base of the steep slopes, following the 6,200 foot contour line on the northern third and the 5,600 foot contour line on most of the remaining portion to the south. The King Top WSA (UT-050-070) is directly to the southwest, separated from this WSA by U.S. Highway 50 and 6. The Howell Peak WSA (UT-050-077) is directly to the North separated from this WSA by a county road. The Notch Peak WSA is surrounded mostly by public lands.

Notch Peak is a distinct landmark in west-central Utah, and is visible for 70 miles.

TABLE 1
LAND STATUS AND ACREAGE SUMMARY IN THE STUDY AREA*

WITHIN THE WSA	ACRES
BLM (surface and subsurface)	51,130
Split-Estate (BLM surface only)	0
In-holdings (State, Private)	4,479
Total	55,609
WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED WILDERNESS BOUNDARY	
BLM (within the WSA)	28,000
BLM (outside the WSA)	0
Split-Estate (within the WSA)	0
Split-Estate (outside the WSA)	0
Total BLM land recommended for wilderness	28,000
In-holdings (State, private)	1,922
WITHIN THE AREA NOT RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS	
BLM	23,130
Split-Estate	0
Total BLM land not recommended for wilderness	23,130
In-holdings (State, Private)	2,557

Source: BLM File Data.

* The Appendix is a detailed table of in-holdings included within the portion of the WSA recommended for designation.

NOTCH PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

A precipice almost 3,000 feet high on the west side of the peak has a shallow groove at the top, giving the mountain its name. Elevations range from around 6,000 feet at the edges of the WSA to Notch Peak, 9,655 feet. Brush is the dominant vegetation at lower elevations, with pinyon-juniper woodland at higher elevations. Conifer forests occupy many of the eastern and northern slopes at the highest elevations. The peak also support isolated patches of aspen. About 9,000 acres of the WSA are in an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and will be nominated as a National Natural Landmark.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Utah BLM Statewide Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) finalized in November 1990. Four alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a partial wilderness alternative, where 28,000 acres would be designated as wilderness and 23,130 acres would be released for uses other than wilderness, which is the recommendation in this report; a no wilderness (no action) alternative; an all wilderness alternative; and a smaller partial wilderness alternative of 9,000 acres.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE:

- 28,000 acres
(recommended for wilderness)
- 23,130 acres
(recommended for nonwilderness)

The recommendation for this WSA is to designate 28,000 acres as wilderness and to release the remaining 23,130 acres for uses other than wilderness. Designation of the entire area as wilderness is considered to be the environmentally preferable alternative as it would result in the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The alternative selected, however, would be implemented in a manner which would utilize all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. This recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any additional in-holding acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners. The Appendix lists all in-holdings and provides information on acquisition.

The recommended portion of the WSA is the central, highest and most mountainous part of the WSA, and includes the best wilderness values in the WSA. All of the area recommended for wilderness designation is natural and has outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Notch Peak rises vertically almost 3,000 feet and is one of the highest cliffs in North America readily identifiable from over 70 miles away. In addition to the scenic grandeur it provides, the area also supports rare plants, a stand of ancient bristlecone pine, and habitat for birds of prey. Wildlife include mule deer, cougar, coyote, badger, chucker and a variety of raptors. All of the ACEC is in the area recommended for wilderness. Eleven percent of the recommended area has outstanding visual quality. Little or no conflict exists with other uses.

The portion of the WSA that is not recommended for wilderness designation (Areas A and B) is mostly sparsely vegetated foothills that lack high quality scenic values and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Nearby mining activities and road traffic detract from solitude in the northern part of the area, which is not being recommended for wilderness. Wilderness designation of this portion of the WSA could impose constraints on access for livestock management. BLM considers other resource values and uses to be more significant than the relatively minimal wilderness values.

3. CRITERIA USED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATION

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

Naturalness is defined as an attribute in which the evidence of man is substantially unnoticeable to the average visitor and where minor imprints of man exhibit no cumulative impact that is substantially noticeable. Essentially all of the WSA meets the naturalness criteria of the Wilderness Act. Approximately 20 miles of ways at lower elevations in the eastern and southern portions of the WSA and a small cabin and mine workings in the Sawtooth Canyon area are substantially unnoticeable. The

NOTCH PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

sheer cliffs on the western side of the WSA appear impenetrable as well as untouched. The high elevation eastern slopes are covered with unscarred stands of conifer and lightly colored aspen groves.

B. Solitude

About 28,000 acres, including all of the area proposed for wilderness designation, meet the Wilderness Act standards for solitude. This area includes the interior, mountainous portion around Notch Peak and Sawtooth and Hell'n Maria Canyons.

The Notch Peak WSA is in the South range of the U.S. Air Force (USAF) Utah Test and Training Range (UTTR), one of the country's busiest military air spaces. From 100 to 150 daily flights, 6 days a week, are made in the UTTR. Some flights are as low as 100 feet above ground level. The WSA is within the area of heaviest use, and aircraft occasionally fly directly over the WSA. Although most of these overflights are subsonic and few are directly over the WSA, they can be an annoyance that detracts from but generally do not eliminate overall opportunities for solitude.

About 23,130 acres in the WSA, including the benchlands not recommended for wilderness designation, do not meet the standards for solitude. The terrain and low vegetation do not provide for seclusion. Sights and sounds on U.S. Highway 50 and 6, along the WSA's southern boundary, vehicular traffic on ways, and the mining activity in Amasa Valley, also detract from solitude.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

All of the portion recommended for wilderness designation, 28,000 acres, provides outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. In the higher parts of the WSA, including Notch Peak, opportunities for hiking are outstanding due to challenging terrain and spectacular views.

Approximately 23,130 acres (45 percent of the WSA) in the foothills in the northern and southern portions of the WSA do not meet the standards for primitive and unconfined recreation because

of the lack of variety in terrain and vegetation.

D. Special Features

Candidate threatened or endangered species, that could inhabit the WSA include the ferruginous hawk, Swainson's hawk, long-billed curlew, western snowy plover, and white-faced ibis.

Bald eagles and peregrine falcons, both listed as endangered species, and golden eagles, a BLM sensitive species, inhabit the WSA.

One sensitive plant species, which has not yet been listed as threatened or endangered, and one plant species which is a candidate to be listed, Eriogonum ammodendrum and Cryptantha compacta, respectively, may occur in the WSA.

Bristlecone pine grows on some of the higher ridges in the WSA. Some of these pines have recently been aged at in excess of 2,000 years old. Refer to Appendix 4 and the Affected Environment, Vegetation and Wildlife Including Special Status Species sections of the Utah BLM Statewide Wilderness Final EIS for additional information.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

A. Expanding the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of this WSA would not add a combination of potential natural vegetation (PNV) ecosystems not presently represented in the NWPS, but it would add an ecosystem (saltbush-greasewood) not represented in the NWPS in Utah.

PNV is the vegetative type that would eventually become climax vegetation if not altered by human interference, and is not necessarily the vegetation that is currently present in an area.

The WSA is in the Intermountain Sagebrush Province/Ecoregion. The PNV ecosystems in the WSA are juniper-pinyon woodland (20,452 acres) and saltbush-greasewood (30,678 acres). Both ecosystems are represented in the NWPS

NOTCH PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

outside of Utah and in BLM study areas in Utah and other states. This information is summarized in Table 2 from data compiled in December 1989.

B. Assessing the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation within a Days Driving Time (5 Hours) of Major Population Centers

The WSA is within a 5-hour drive of the Salt Lake City-Ogden, Utah; Provo-Orem, Utah; and Las Vegas, Nevada standard metropolitan statistical areas.

Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a 5-hour drive of these population centers.

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

A Notch Peak wilderness would not contribute significantly to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS. As of January 1987, the NWPS included 23 areas comprising 4,868,316 acres in Utah and (Nevada and Idaho) the adjacent states nearest the WSA.

**TABLE 2
ECOSYSTEM REPRESENTATION**

	NWPS AREAS		OTHER BLM STUDIES	
	AREAS	ACRES	AREAS	ACRES
BAILEY-KUCHLER CLASSIFICATION (PNV)				
NATIONWIDE (INTERMOUNTAIN SAGEBRUSH PROVINCE)				
Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	6	93,656	75	2,133,455
Saltbush-Greasewood	3	45,553	37	1,000,929
UTAH (INTERMOUNTAIN SAGEBRUSH PROVINCE)				
Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	2	14,955	13	238,981
Saltbush-Greasewood	0	0	7	116,167

Source: BLM File Data.

**TABLE 3
WILDERNESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS OF MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS**

POPULATION CENTERS	NWPS AREAS		OTHER BLM STUDIES	
	AREAS	ACRES	AREAS	ACRES
Salt Lake City-Ogden, Utah	10	1,079,807	78	2,239,275
Provo-Orem, Utah	11	708,638	90	2,766,468
Las Vegas, Nevada	38	3,132,130	54	2,134,358

Source: BLM File Data.

It would, however, supplement the distribution of wilderness in the Great Basin.

In a clockwise direction within 100 miles of the WSA, beginning to the northeast, are the 25,500-acre Deseret

NOTCH PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Peak Wilderness, the 28,000-acre Mt. Nebo Wilderness, and, to the south, the 7,000-acre Ashdown Gorge Wilderness. All three are in National Forests. No wilderness areas have been designated west or south in the vicinity of the WSA, however. Only six wilderness areas, totaling 272,994 acres, are in the Great Basin.

Manageability (The area must be capable of being effectively managed to preserve its wilderness character.)

The portion of the WSA that is recommended for wilderness designation can be managed as wilderness to preserve values now present in the area. Resource and land conflicts are not now a problem in the WSA and are not anticipated to be in the future.

There are two post-FLPMA oil and gas leases (450 acres) in the portion of the WSA recommended as wilderness. They are subject to the nonimpairment stipulation and can be managed to protect wilderness values. One hundred and seventy-nine of the 207 mining claims in the WSA are in the area recommended for wilderness, but development is not projected in the foreseeable future and they are not expected to be a manageability problem.

There are three State-owned sections (1,922 acres) in the recommended area. Major developments on these sections and related access and activity would reduce the quality of wilderness values, mainly in the southern portion of the wilderness, but the potential for development is low.

Current recreational use of about 250 annual visitor days is relatively low and is mostly or entirely nonvehicular and dispersed. Wilderness designation would not affect this pattern, as most of the terrain is too rough to encourage vehicular recreational use. Livestock grazing could continue as at present, requiring little or no change in management.

The USAF has stated that military flights will continue in the vicinity of the WSA, whether it is designated or not. Overflights would detract from solitude, and management could not mitigate such disturbance. This conflict can be

resolved only at the Congressional level.

The area not recommended for wilderness designation could be managed as wilderness, although it would be more difficult to do so.

There are one oil and gas lease (1,640 acres), 28 mining claims, and four State-owned sections in this portion of the WSA, but developments that would reduce the quality of wilderness values are not projected.

BLM has concluded that nonwilderness uses and resources could be managed in a manner that would not degrade the relatively sparse wilderness values in the 23,130 acres not recommended for wilderness designation.

Energy and Mineral Resource Values

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Bureau of Mines (USBM) prepared a mineral assessment report for the Notch Peak WSA (USGS Bulletin 1749-C, Douglas B. Stoesser, et al., 1989). The investigation included 28,000 acres of the WSA, which is the portion of the study area that is recommended for wilderness designation. According to the report, the northern part of the study area includes part of the Notch Peak mining district, which has produced tungsten from mines within and near the study area. Mining within the district, but outside the study area, included gold placer mining. A resource of 775 short tons, which averages 0.47 percent tungsten trioxide was defined at the Brown Queen mine in the northern part of the study area. Limestone and sand and gravel occur within the study area. For the purposes of assessing mineral resource potential the study area was divided into five subareas: the granite (Notch Peak intrusive), the metamorphic contact zone of the granite, the area north of the contact zone, the area south of the contact zone, and a small drainage in the southwestern part of the study area. The Notch Peak intrusive has moderate mineral resource potential for undiscovered molybdenum, gold, copper, uranium, and thorium, and low mineral resource potential for undiscovered tungsten, silver, lead, and zinc. The metamorphic contact zone of the granite

NOTCH PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

has high mineral resource potential for undiscovered tungsten, and moderate mineral resource potential for undiscovered molybdenum, gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, uranium, and thorium. The area to the north of the contact zone of the granite has moderate mineral resource potential for undiscovered tungsten, molybdenum, gold, silver, copper, lead, and zinc, and low mineral resource potential for undiscovered uranium and thorium. The area to the south of the contact zone of the granite has low mineral resource potential for undiscovered tungsten, molybdenum, gold, silver, copper, lead, uranium, and thorium. The area underlying a small drainage in the southwestern part of the study area has moderate mineral resource potential for undiscovered tungsten and molybdenum, and low mineral resource potential for undiscovered gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, uranium, and thorium. The entire study area has moderate resource for undiscovered oil and gas. The entire study area has low resource potential for all other metals, coal, and geothermal energy.

According to BLM geologists, the geology of the WSA is also favorable for beryllium. Thermal springs discharge northwest of the WSA, and the WSA is believed to be marginally favorable for low temperature geothermal resources with a high degree of certainty that this potential energy source exists. Geothermal resources would be uneconomical to extract. Seismic surveys and drilling have been done near the WSA. The occurrence of large oil and gas deposits is unlikely, but small deposits may exist. They would be most likely to occur along the eastern margin of the WSA.

Impacts on Resources

The comparative impact table (Table 4) summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for alternatives including designation of the entire area as wilderness.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Social and economic factors concerning this WSA were not considered to be significant issues in the EIS.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. Comments received during the early stages of the EIS preparation were used to develop significant study issues and alternatives for the ultimate management of the WSA.

During formal public review of the Draft EIS, a total of 59 inputs specifically addressing this WSA were received from 71 commenters, including oral statements received at 17 public hearings on the EIS. Each letter or oral testimony was considered to be one input. Duplicate letters or oral statements by the same commenter were not counted as additional inputs or signatures. Each individual was credited with one signature or testimony regardless of the number of inputs.

In general, 57 commenters supported wilderness designation for part or all of the WSA, while 10 commenters were opposed. Four commenters addressed the relative merits of the EIS, but took no formal position on wilderness designation.

Those favoring wilderness commented on special features present in the WSA and opportunities for primitive recreation. The majority of those commenting in favor of wilderness were from urban areas in Utah. Of particular concern was the need to protect wilderness values.

Those opposing wilderness were concerned that wilderness would preclude mineral exploration and development and be harmful to State and local economy. Four of the commenters were from rural Utah, two from urban Utah, and four were from outside the State.

Two Federal agencies, the USAF and the USBM commented on the Draft EIS for this WSA. The Federal agencies did not take a position regarding designation or non-designation of the WSA. The USAF noted that low altitude flights will continue over the WSA with or without wilderness designation and that they will not negotiate nor sign any agreement to avoid the proposed wilderness area. This conflict can be resolved only on the Congressional level.

NOTCH PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

The USBM noted that BLM's Final EIS should include the findings of the USGS and USBM mineral investigations and those findings would be available in November 1988. These findings have been incorporated into the Final EIS and study report. The USBM also commented that BLM had understated the petroleum potential of the WSA.

No comment letters were received on the Final EIS.

There are seven State sections (4,479 acres) in the WSA. In commenting on the Draft EIS, the State of Utah expressed general opposition to wilderness designation but did not take a definite position regarding wilderness designation of the WSA. The State commented that the Notch Peak WSA possesses both high wilderness values and a high degree of conflicts compared to other WSAs in the region. The State noted that the partial wilderness alternative would exclude areas of low wilderness quality which are probably unmanageable as wilderness and would minimize potential conflicts with mineral and livestock interests. Specific State comments on the Draft EIS dealt with inadequacies of the geology discussion, underrating of the favorability for minerals, and the presence of a rare plant species in the WSA.

The Millard County Master Plan does not specifically address wilderness. The Millard County Commission favors protection of natural and esthetic resources on public lands as well as multiple use and believes that these objectives can be met without wilderness designation. The Commission has endorsed the Consolidated Local Government Response to Wilderness that opposes wilderness designation for BLM lands in Utah.

NOTCH PEAK WSA

Table 4
Comparative Summary of Impacts by Alternative

Issue Topics	Alternatives			
	Recommendation Large Partial Wilderness (28,000 Acres)	No Action/No Wilderness	All Wilderness (51,130 Acres)	Small Partial Wilderness (9,000 Acres)
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Wilderness values would be preserved in the designated area which is about 55 percent of the WSA. In the foreseeable future, naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be slightly reduced in quality on 1 acre of the WSA due to guzzler development from which wildlife special features would benefit. Continued vehicular use of about 13 miles of ways would detract from opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Special features would be preserved.	Wilderness values would not be protected by wilderness designation. In the foreseeable future, naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be slightly reduced in quality on 1 acre of the WSA due to guzzler development from which wildlife special features would benefit. Special features would not be adversely affected. Continued vehicular use of about 20 miles of ways would detract from opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.	Wilderness values would be preserved. Naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be slightly reduced in quality on 1 acre of the WSA due to guzzler development from which wildlife special features would benefit.	Wilderness values would be preserved in the designated area which is about 18 percent of the WSA. In the foreseeable future, naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be slightly reduced in quality on 1 acre of the WSA due to guzzler development from which wildlife special features would benefit. Vehicular use of about 20 miles of ways would detract from opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in the non-designated area. Special features would be preserved.

NOTCH PEAK WSA

Table 4 (Continued)
Comparative Summary of Impacts by Alternative

Issue Topics	Alternatives			
	Recommendation Large Partial Wilderness (28,000 Acres)	No Action/No Wilderness	All Wilderness (51,130 Acres)	Small Partial Wilderness (9,000 Acres)
Impacts on Livestock Management	Effects would be the same as for the All Wilderness Alternative.	Livestock grazing would not be adversely affected because management and access would continue as at present.	Vehicular restrictions could inconvenience livestock operators in the area. Management costs and sheep losses due to predators could increase.	Livestock grazing would not be affected because 91 percent of the forage, the existing developments, and all 20 miles of ways would be in the nondesignated area.
Impacts on Recreation	Opportunities for primitive recreation would be preserved in the designated area. Opportunities for vehicular access while hunting and sightseeing would be lost on 7 miles of ways. Overall, recreational use would increase. The quality of the primitive recreation experience would decrease for some users as vehicle use increases.	Primitive recreational opportunities would not be protected. Opportunities for vehicular recreation on 20 miles of ways would continue. Overall, recreational use would increase. The quality of the primitive recreation experience would decrease for some users as vehicle use increases.	Opportunities for primitive recreation would be preserved throughout the WSA. Vehicular recreational opportunities would be lost on 20 miles of ways. Primitive recreational use would increase, but overall recreational use would decrease initially.	Opportunities for primitive recreational use would be preserved in the designated area. Opportunities for vehicular use of 20 miles of ways in the nondesignated area would not be affected. Recreational use overall would increase. The quality of the primitive recreation experience would decrease as vehicle use increases.

NOTCH PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Appendix
Estimated Costs of Acquisition of Non-Federal Holdings Within Areas Recommended for Designation a

Legal Description (Prior to any Subdivision)	Total Acreage	Number of Owners (If Parcel has been subdivided)	Type of Ownership by Estate (Federal, State, Private, Other) (Surface Estate) (Subsurface Estate)	Presently Proposed for Acquisition (Yes, No)	Preferred Method of Acquisition (Purchase, Exchange, Other)	Estimated Cost of Acquisition (Processing Costs)	
						(Land Costs)	(Processing Costs)
T. 19 S., R. 14 W., Sec. 16	640.00		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000
T. 19 S., R. 14 W., Sec. 36	640.00		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000
T. 20 S., R. 14 W., Sec. 2	642.00		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000

a The estimated costs listed in this appendix in no way represent a Federal appraised value of the land or mineral estate, but are rough estimates based on sales or exchanges of lands or mineral estates with similar characteristics to those included in the WSA. The estimates are for purposes of establishing a range of potential costs to the government of acquiring non-Federal holdings and in no way represent an offer to purchase or exchange at the cost estimate included in this appendix.